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Saturday
Evening

READER OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION

Selected by The Editors of
The Saturday Evening Post

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by The Curtis Publishing Company
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number:
64-11293
Published by arrangement with Doubleday &
Company, Inc.
Doubleday edition published in January, 1964
First printing: October, 1963

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THE SECOND TRIP TO MARS

by Ward Moore

Until its report was known, the Murphy-Gobiniev-Langois-Alemeda-Mutsuhara expedition to Mars in 2002 was thought to be the first successful one. Truth is, the first flight was achieved, quite accidentally, by a Humphrey Beachy-Cumberland in 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

His full name was Humphrey Howard Clarence Beachy-Cumberland, and he was a distant—very distant—connection of the Churchills. Humphrey rather considered the Churchills pushing; he had no handle in front of his name, and held a low idea of peerages.

There had been Beachys at Agincourt and Crécy; Beachy-Cumberland was a good name at Naseby and Ramillies, Prestonpans and Salamanca; he didn't propose to change it for Lord Whatsis or the Earl of Nowhere. Even at twenty-five—he'd been born a twelvemonth after the Prince Consort died—he had solid principles. He had a lively interest in progress (improved housing for tenants; free lectures for the laboring classes); and a sense of responsibility (inspection of drains; pensions for superannuated servants).

Progress accounted for his interest in Giles Pundershot. Certainly not compatibility. Pundershot was a cad in every sense: he was base-born, he misplaced the letter *h*, he borrowed money without meaning to repay; he read other people's mail, he seduced housemaids, he wore the tie of a school he had not attended. Given the opportunity, he would probably have shot foxes. He was also a genius of the first magnitude, a physicist so far ahead of his time no university tolerated mention of his name, no scholar of standing bothered to refute him. Humphrey gave him a pound a week, rooms in the servants' wing, and a reasonable charge account at an ironworks of which he was a director. He also allowed him an undergardener and a half acre of ground for the construction of a flying machine. Both Humphrey and Pundershot were sure heavier-than-air flight would come before 1900.

Pundershot's flying machine was along revolutionary lines. It was, in fact, a projectile—a projectile without a cannon. "Megnetism," explained Pundershot; "ettrection and repulsion. Enti-grevity in a word. Spurns the earth."

"Rilly?" asked Humphrey politely.

"Trouble so far is it spurns it too bloody"—Humphrey winced—"too bloody much. If I'm right, it will go three hundred miles a second."

"Too much," commented Humphrey. "Too fast altogether."

"Eighteen thousand miles a minute," said Pundershot. "Million miles in an hour. Speed like thet is worthless."

"Rah-ther," agreed Humphrey.

"Well," said Pundershot, gloomily cheerful, "expect I'll have to tear it down and put it together eggayne."

Humphrey looked faintly dubious. He knew to a farthing what the projectile had cost him; experience taught that a second one would be at least four times as expensive.

"Er—what's it like inside?" he asked, putting off the moment of approving Pundershot's revised experiment.

"Nothing an emeteur'd understend. False 'ull, suspended and padded, oxygen tenk—machine's airtight—megnetic controls: 'on' and 'off.' Bit crowded because of the shock-ebsoyng mechanism between inner and outer 'ulls. Barely room for one, and dark. Want to 'ave a look round?"

Humphrey didn't particularly, but tact (mightn't Pundershot be offended if he showed no interest?) and shrewdness (after all, with a fellow like that the whole thing might be papier-mâché) made him peer through the open hatch.

"Get in if you want," invited Pundershot. "Can't see much, but you can morrerless feel things."

"Well," said Humphrey doubtfully, "well. All right."

Pundershot's description of the interior was understatement. Humphrey saw nothing, felt only a foretaste of the coffin, tried to squirm back.

"'Ere!" exclaimed Pundershot. "Watch what you're doing. Ottermatic 'atch closer's right next to your arm."

Naturally, Humphrey jerked his arm. It hit a button; the hatch cover snapped shut. "I say!" he cried, struggling to open the cylinder again.

Instead he connected with the unseen "on" button. The projectile rejected the gravity of earth with utter repulsion. Forty-eight million miles off, give or take a few furlongs, the planet Mars winked redly. The nose of the machine pointed precisely for it.

Humphrey Beachy-Cumberland's last thought as he tore through the earth's gaseous envelope was that he had pro-

vided a pension for Pundershot in his will. He wished he hadn't.

The Martians who surrounded him forty-eight hours later had reverted to barbarism a thousand generations before. The great cities had eroded into dust, knowledge had faded into fable and incantation; the delicate balances of a completely free, egalitarian, nonviolent society had collapsed. Small tribes, so barbarous that leadership was not inherited, but assumed by the strongest or most cunning, warred perpetually on one another, eager for new victims. Even so, Humphrey was lucky; practically all Martians had abandoned cannibalism.

He looked up into the impassive faces—the Martians all topped him by at least a head—noting the coarsely woven garments, the pale skins, wide chests, loosely held iron knives and hatchets.

“Water—please!” he gasped.

A Martian uttered some sharp syllables. *Bother*, thought Humphrey; *I shall have to teach them English. What a nuisance.*

The unintelligible sounds must have been humorous; the others laughed briefly. Ominously. Humphrey raised an imaginary glass to his lips. When there was no sign of comprehension, he cupped his hands and made exaggerated drinking noises. The joking Martian drew an ugly iron knife.

“Here!” said Humphrey sharply. “Put that down. You might hurt someone.” He never enjoyed crude humor. He turned half away, repeating his pantomime. The knife wielder paused.

“Water,” repeated Humphrey, raising his voice despite his dry throat, knowing foreigners always managed to understand sooner or later, if spoken to loudly and slowly enough.

Much later, after being threatened with mutilation or death in many ingenious ways—avoided by staring at the would-be assassin and assuring him coldly that this was no way to behave—Humphrey was on his knees at the edge of an unbelievably wide canal, assuaging his thirst with the dark, brackish water. His captors stood behind him, by no means intimidated by this stunted creature who seemed without normal fear—without normal sense either—and who did not speak as everyone else spoke. Not intimidated, but certainly puzzled.

Humphrey gazed across the canal and peered up and down to where it disappeared in the horizons. “No real rivers, I suppose. Well, have to make a start somewhere; call this the Thames. Thames Canal.”

He turned to the Martians. "Thames," he said distinctly, "Teh-mmms. Cah-nal." He pointed to the engineering work built by their ancestors sixty thousand years earlier.

"*Fenutch goobra*," muttered a Martian.

"No, no," insisted Humphrey. "Thames. Thames Canal." He moved back to the water to wash his face and hands. "Have to do something about a decent bathe. The beggars have iron; ought to be easy enough to make some sort of tub."

Daily tubs were a necessity, but other necessities took immediate precedence. He judged his hosts primitive enough to sleep in the open—a course he did not propose to follow. Discomfort hardened a chap, made him fit, but privacy was the basis of civilization. And Humphrey wasn't giving up civilization, even under the present trying circumstances.

"Well," he said briskly, "can't stand about all day. What about a spot of food now? Food, you know. Foo-ood."

Humphrey was distressed to discover just how backward the Martians were. After the childishness of threatening a stranger with beastly tortures, he hardly expected the culture of Manchester or Birmingham. He did not look for niceties like umbrellas or *Punch*. But they didn't even have the institution of the family. Tribes were divided along the lines of—h'm—gender. Boys remained with the women till they were old enough to join in the endless war with other tribes, returning only for—for carnal purposes. It was all thoroughly immoral.

Worse, there was no inheritance, primogeniture or entail. Humphrey could not stand by while this sort of thing went on without seeming to give it his approval.

His captors still strove to nerve themselves to kill him, but merely trying was a little harder every day. It was quite absurd and a trifle indecent to violate custom and the fundamental code—you shall not let a stranger live—this way, but never before had a stranger been so completely un-co-operative. He refused to shrink from a down-chopping ax or thrusting knife. He could not even be properly finished off in his sleep; attempts at stealthy approach to the rough shelter he had made were always met by an alert and disconcerting questioner.

Well, so long as convention had been flouted by failing to bash his brains or cut his throat instantly, Mister—this was as much of "Mr. Beachy-Cumberland" as they found it convenient to pronounce—could just as well be dispatched next month. Or even the month after. Meanwhile, now that they

understood some of his words, possibly they could learn a few tricks to overcome the neighboring tribes.

Humphrey had no intention of being useful that way. To fight for Queen and country was an occasional disagreeable—and glorious—necessity. There was neither necessity nor glory in these aboriginal clashes. They were merely nasty.

Nevertheless, he inadvertently increased the power of the tribe and his own prestige. In these regions, at least, there were neither trees nor animals—as a lover of roast beef with Yorkshire pudding, he regretted the absence of animal life—only abundant variety of annual vegetable growth by the canal banks. So weapons which at a similar stage of development would have been of wood or bone were crudely forged from the oxidized iron lying so abundantly on the sands. Coal, too, was plentiful, cropping up in ridges.

Humphrey, as a stockholder and director, had conscientiously studied the ironworks. Though no metallurgist, he could make coke from coal for a stronger, lighter metal than the Martians used for their clumsy tools. Working at first alone, then with a few who thought it amusing to imitate him, he produced knives which cut rather than sawed, hoes to cultivate with, for heavier food crops and stronger fibers for weaving, shovels and picks to dig the less common ores.

The Martians saw the advantages of his methods and made themselves better battle-axes. Humphrey considered battle-axes contrary to progress.

“Look here,” he said to a young Martian who had been among the first to copy his manner of smelting and forging. “This won’t do, you know.”

“*Squirrup chedges*,” murmured the young Martian.

“Nonsense,” said Humphrey. “You can talk properly enough if you put your mind to it. Now then, why do you people want to fight among yourselves all the time?”

“*Kerestheme*,” said the Martian.

“Speak up,” ordered Humphrey. “None of your gibberish.”

“Foo-wud,” tried the Martian haltingly. “Wo-min.”

“Yes,” reflected Humphrey. “To be sure. Of course.” He pondered. “Your name’s Tom Smith, isn’t it?”

“Mogolum Tu.”

“That’s not a name, it’s a whatyamacallit for a slide trombone. Believe me, you’re much better off as Tom Smith. Now then, about food and—er—women. You see how easy it is to grow bigger plants by using better hoes. Now we can rig up a plow—no animals, nuisance—and by planting instead of trusting to luck, there will be more than this tribe can eat, even if all feast every day. Food enough for all the tribes.

"As for—uh—women, that can be managed better, too." Delicately he explained the advantages of monogamous marriage.

The problem on Humphrey's mind had nothing to do with the iron water wheel now creaking and clanking in the Thames Canal to bring irrigating water to sands uncultivated for millennia, nor the improved looms for finer weaving, nor negotiations with still another tribe considering joining the peaceful and prosperous federation. It did not even concern the group of dissidents around Henry Green—formerly Thotcho Gor—who protested that Tom Smith and Mister were going too far and too fast.

Humphrey's problem was holy orders. Broad Church himself, he knew little theology, always having left such matters to the vicar. The phrase, "apostolic succession," floated through his mind: one could not instruct selected natives in the gist of the Book of Common Prayer—he could remember long passages—and set them up to administer the sacraments. To think of it smacked of nonconformity. Yet how were the marriages he had arranged to be regularized? True, even irregular monogamy was preferable to the old conditions, but it was still irregular. And what of baptism and burial? When he himself was committed to the earth—Mars, then—he wanted the prescribed service read decently over his body.

Meanwhile he kept a growing group of assistants vastly busy. Tom Smith remained his closest disciple, but Tom had his hands full carrying out the projects Humphrey originated, explaining, placating, persuading. For new reforms and inventions, Humphrey depended on men who only recently stalked human game. He was amazed at how quickly they grasped ideas or theories, often hazy in his own mind, and translated them into practice. He knew paper could be made by pulping woody fibers; they found the plant best suited and devised means of production. He outlined the principles of type cutting and setting; they contrived a press. He had rough notions about glass and cement; they formed panes and bowls which were at least translucent; mixed concrete and mortar which promised to remain hard.

Reluctantly he compromised on holy orders. A ship's captain, he argued, performed valid marriages and committed bodies to the deep. Why not the captain of a planet beyond the seas of earth? He knew his logic grew shakier the further he extended it, but something had to be done. He soothed his conscience by telling himself he was not ordaining clergy, merely delegating functions; he had his students call them-

selves "deputy vicar" or "acting curate." Now, whatever happened to him—and he was aware that Henry Green's anti-Mister faction had grown dangerously since the extension of civilization to the tribes beyond the Serpentine and Avon canals—there would be men to teach the young and instill decorum into those whose behavior might otherwise become scandalous.

In 1897 they launched the first steamship on the Thames Canal. Humphrey had worked out a Martian calendar using earth years; its defect lay in his uncertainty of the exact date of his arrival, so he was never entirely easy about celebrating the Queen's Birthday, and Boxing Day was distinctly a hit-or-miss affair. But the launching unquestionably occurred in 1897, ten years after the projectile landed. The ship was small, shallow draft and cranky, with an unpredictable boiler and inefficient paddle wheels, but it carried Humphrey's emissaries to strange places where exotic plants grew and copper and tungsten were plentiful as iron, where Mister was only a name in a vague legend, and they were met with missiles as often as listeners to the message of progress.

This was the year bank notes were engraved and the Martians taught the fine points of property and to sell things for eight shillings sixpence ha'penny instead of giving them away. Wages and real estate and commerce, profits, dividends and unemployment—what a blessing civilization was.

The issue of Henry Green and the grumblings of his followers could be put off no longer. Humphrey had broadsides printed explaining the parliamentary system, responsible government and constitutional rule. At the first election, Tom Smith was returned for New Brighton on the Tweed Canal. Enough supporters were elected for him to form a government with himself as Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Robert Jones—born Poromby Lusu—as First Lord of the Admiralty. Henry Green was, of course, Leader of the Opposition. Tactfully, the adjective Loyal was not insisted upon.

One of the first acts of the new House was to forbid marriage with a deceased wife's sister, another provided a postal service, a third decreed that judges and barristers wear wigs. A Defence of the Realm bill was vigorously fought by Green, who protested it would stamp out the last vestige of ancient liberties ("Shall we yield our own customs to the airy theories of an alien from an inferior planet?" Cries of "Hear! Hear!" from the Opposition, and "Shame! Savage! Slander!" from the Treasury Bench). Parliament was prorogued and the Prime Minister appealed to the country.

New Brighton on Tweed again returned Tom Smith, but Green's party won a majority of seats. During the polling this possibility had fathered dark prophecies, yet the new Conservative—for so Green called his party—government took office without friction and immediately passed a Defence of the Realm Act over the bitter outcries of Smith's Liberals.

The political situation settled, economic and religious conditions flourishing, Humphrey turned to culture. A weekly Times foreshadowed a daily; a public school was begun, an Encyclopædia Martiana projected. A Philosophical Society and an Art Academy were discussed and steps taken to form a Philharmonic Orchestra. Humphrey had the alloyed pleasure of turning the first telescope earthward and the pure joy of eating the first Martian crumpet.

He was only fifty-five in 1917, when the last wild tribes gave up their independence. That was the year Tom Smith finally resigned the Liberal leadership to Herbert Noro. Humphrey's influence in the matter of name changing was weakening; the clergy buttressed it so far as first names went, but the tendency to retain the old Martian surnames grew. It was also the year Humphrey started building Cumberland House and landscaping the flower gardens leading from it down to the Severn Canal.

Though fifty-five was a ridiculously early age to consider retirement, he found less and less to do. Everything was in good hands. If he looked askance at some of the doings of his protégés he would not deny the Martians had taken hold. There was good stuff in them.

He did not travel much; when you've seen one Martian canal you've seen them all. He revised and enlarged the plans for Cumberland House; he supervised the masons and glaziers; he kept gardeners busy. He gave some time to compiling an edition of Landed Martian Gentry.

But largely he spent his days talking over old times, often with those who had once plotted to kill him. Cumberland House was staffed with men who had not adapted well to the new ways or backslid from them. Humphrey and they recreated the past, and both, for different reasons, felt better for it.

One Guy Fawkes Day he sat down, dressed for dinner, in excellent spirits. His butler served a plate of lichen broth and was withdrawing when Humphrey called, "Wait! I——"

The man rushed to catch his collapsing form, but, himself an old campaigner, he knew death when he saw it.

He was buried in his gardens; a stone he had designed was put up over his grave.

HUMPHREY HOWARD CLARENCE
BEACHY-CUMBERLAND
ESQUIRE
Formerly of Buckinghamshire
Who always remembered the land of
his birth.

Sean McDairmuid Murphy, an American, led the United Nations Interplanetary Expedition of 2002, so far as the other nationals in it—Yasu Matsuhara excepted—acknowledged any leadership. More accurately, Doctor Murphy was the senior scientist of the WAC Field Marshal, and its anthropologist.

Sergei Goviniev, the ethnologist, carried on a cold feud with the philologist, Hyacinthe Langois, on whether Martian civilization would have terrestrial analogies. Luis Alemeda, the geologist, was convinced neither humans nor any history of them would be found.

Doctor Matsuhara felt that Alemeda was biased by his vocation; he himself had an open mind on all subjects but botany and baseball. He was as sure he would find bamboo, or something very like it, as he was that San Francisco would win the pennant and series in '03. Anyway, '04.

The expedition was to have included a sixth member, Sir David Rabinovits. But since the United Kingdom withdrew from the Canadian-Australian-New Zealand-African-West Indian Commonwealth in 1990, Westminster had shown little interest in new horizons. Sir David had been dropped and the expedition left without a biologist.

"As well," said Langois. "Who can tell what comes from perfidious Albion?"

"'Perfidious,' yes," muttered Gobiniev. "A rootless cosmopolitan, gilded by a corrupt, imperialist Labor government; undoubtedly he was ordered to work against the People's Democracies. Like the toadies of the so-called Fifth Republic."

"Don't be silly," said Sean Murphy. "There's much to be laid at the door of Johnny Bull—Ireland is still divided—but using Dave Rabinovits as an agent wouldn't be part of it. They wouldn't pay Dave's way because they don't care about Mars or the UN or anything else but some silly celebration they're having this year."

The WAC Field Marshal made a beautiful landing not ten miles from where Humphrey's projectile had plowed up the sands. It was now a Planetary Park, kept primitively intact.

"Desert," crowed Doctor Alemeda. "Sterile desert."

Langois shook his head obstinately, scanning the sands through field glasses. A dust cloud appeared, resolving into a crowd of people. "What did I tell you? Men! And, I hope, women also."

"Those bits of color seem to be flags," said Matsuhara.

"Impossible," said Murphy. "Some evolutionary quirk."

"Union Jacks," identified Alemeda.

"A plot!" cried Gobiniev. "A trick to discredit the U.S.S.R.!"

An engine on wide iron wheels puffed black smoke ahead of a multi-doored, enclosed car. It stopped short of the WAC Field Marshal; the crowd on foot pressed close behind. The carriage doors opened and Martians came forward, dressed in tubular trousers and double-breasted coats. One of them, high hat in left hand, extended his right.

"From earth, what?" asked the Martian. "Good show."

"Oh, no," said Murphy. "Oh, no."

"How is it you don't speak Russian?" growled Gobiniev.

"Are you Russians?" inquired the Martian coldly. "Crimea and Turkestan? The bear that walks like a man?"

"Only one," explained Alemeda; "I am myself of Uruguay."

"Ah, the Banda Oriental—the land we lost.' I presume there is also a Frenchman? Possibly an American?"

Matsuhara said diffidently, "We are surprised to find that your language is English."

"Really? Yet we aren't surprised to find you using it. But let bygones be bygones. I'm Austen Aboxu, Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Defence. Welcome—officially this time—to Mars. Since we first sighted you we've been getting up a reception at the New Oxford Guildhall. Come as you are—heh-heh—I don't suppose you're prepared to dress anyway."

A slightly dazed expedition heard his apologetic offer of a lift in his railway carriage. "It's a bit primitive; we're not much on land vehicles. Ships now—well, we rather pride ourselves there. Rules the waves and so on, you know."

Martian Coldstream Guards with imitation-bearskin busbies being placed around the WAC Field Marshal, they entered the carriage. "Naturally, we were disappointed this wasn't a British go," said the Prime Minister. "But I expect there'll be one along any day or so. Muddling through, of course; England loses every battle but the last one."

"So they say," mumbled Murphy.

"Now let me give you an idea of what will be going on at the Guildhall. The Acting Archbishop of Mars first; afraid you'll find him a bore. The Dean's worse. However, we must respect the cloth. I hope now they send us out some proper chaps, ordained and all that sort of thing."

"No doubt," said Murphy numbly.

"Then the Leader of the Opposition will have a few well-chosen. He'll pitch into me properly for not welcoming you as he would if the last by-elections had gone the other way. You mustn't mind; it's all in the way of business and I should do the same if he were the right honorable and I only the member for New Basingstoke. Then there'll be the Gentleman Ushers of the Black Rod, the Warden of the Cinque Ports, the Lord Lieutenant of the Martian Poles——"

There were indeed. All these and many more, all with exceedingly long speeches of welcome to the intrepid explorers from "our foster-mother planet." Between speeches they nibbled at filet of pressed Martian grass, Mars sprouts à la Gladstone, and Canalgae au pommes de Mars. At length Sean Murphy asked permission to speak. This being granted—to the discomfiture of the leader writer for the Times, who had been about to make a very witty speech—Murphy began doubtfully, "I was commissioned by the United Nations to take possession of this planet in the name of the UN for all——"

Prime Minister Aboxu stopped him with a wave of the hand. "I'm afraid you can't do that, you know."

"Well," said Murphy, "I can see you're civilized; it's not like taking over an empty world. Perhaps you'll want to join the UN yourselves?"

"I'm afraid you don't understand," said the Prime Minister gently. "We're not a nation. At least not as you use the word. We owe our first and full allegiance to the Crown. After all, this is Her Majesty's Dominion of Mars and it is entirely up to Her Majesty—acting upon my advice—whether we join this—uh—United Nations thing."

"The fourth British Empire," muttered Sean Murphy brokenly. "Kathleen ni Houlihan, is there no justice?"

"Tomorrow," said the Prime Minister, suavely forestalling the Times' leader writer, "we've rather a treat. There'll be a march past of bobbies in the morning; a cricket match before tea; and a reconstruction—we've all the songs, but the words are a bit sketchy—of Pinafore in the evening. I hope you'll overlook our colonial shortcomings. But there are things

we're most anxious to hear about. First, the Queen, Her Majesty. She is—dead?"

"Not as far as I know," answered Murphy carelessly.

"But—— It hardly seems possible. She is so old."

"Old? Oh, not so very, the way they look at age now."

Mr. Aboxu was puzzled. The Crown was immortal—but the Queen? No, no; he remembered his history too well. Still alive? He understood the difference between earth and Martian years, even with the confusion of a Martian calendar based on terrestrial rotation, and could usually translate them in his head, but the exciting day and his brief but telling defense of the dignity of the Crown confused him. It did seem that Her Majesty must be nearly two hundred, but perhaps there were new ways of reckoning since Mister's day. No, that would hardly—— Ah, but science; Mister always regretted not knowing more of science and spoke of the time when life would be greatly lengthened through its discoveries.

"Ah, yes. Quite."

Langois dredged his memory to please his hosts, "They rejoice in England this year. It is the Queen's Jubilee."

The Jubilee? But that was the year Mister had arrived. The Golden Jubilee, the fiftieth anniversary of her reign. This must be—the hundred and sixty-fifth. No doubt of some special significance Mister had neglected to mention. "The Jubilee. Naturally. We're celebrating here too."

The master of ceremonies tapped impatiently. "Port, if you please. I know we all wish to drink to our visitors."

"Ah," sighed Gobiniev.

"So, first, our customary toast. . . . Mr. Prime Minister."

Mr. Aboxu rose and held his wineglass. Everyone at the table, including the explorers, followed his example.

"Gentlemen," said the Right Honorable Austen Aboxu, PC, MP; Member, Royal Martian Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, his voice trembling slightly, "the Queen!"

They drank, and all snapped the stems of their glasses so no lesser toasts might ever be drunk from them again. In this, as in so much else, they did as Humphrey had taught them. It had new meaning now, now that, for the first time since Mister's day, Home seemed so close.

From the pages of The Saturday Evening Post— twenty dazzling flights of the imagination

Included are:

THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH Robert A. Heinlein

THE PLACE OF THE GODS Stephen Vincent Benét

THE SECOND TRIP TO MARS Ward Moore

THE LOST CONTINENT Geoffrey Household

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L I B R A R Y

LITHO'D IN CANADA

